**Confessing Sins**

To identify our own sin is uncomfortable and unpleasant, but not recognizing our own transgression is to live in moral darkness. Jesus said, “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.” (John 3:19). An old friend of mine used to say, “My sin doesn’t look so bad until I see someone else wearing it”. To identify it, and label it correctly for all its ugliness is what is needed. “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” (Prov. 28:13)

The easy way is just to ignore your sin, but to live in self-deception brings shame before God and man. The Proverb writer wants his audience to “confess” and “forsake” their sins. Confessing is the first step. Forsaking is the second step. God will help you, if you seek him in this process. You may want to confess in private to God. You may need a friend to hear your confession. “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. “ (James 5:16).

 But we should not confess our sins unless we are willing to forsake them. We must be willing to not only stop the ugly behavior, but make restitution where we can for the harm that we have done. If you have stolen, give it back (Luke 19:7-10, Eze.33:15, Eph. 4:28). This includes your own soul. Your soul and body belong to God. If we take our mind and body to serve Satan’s ways, we have robbed God of what is rightfully his. So how do you restore your soul to God? You can’t, but Jesus can. Jesus suffered for our sins (Isaiah 53), was willing to die in our place. We are now told to repent of our sins and be baptized which is like a death and a birth at the same time. Dying to the old person who you were, and being now born of God, following Jesus’ teaching and example. Babies are never baptized in the New Testament because they haven’t sinned.

Repenting and being baptized is something that an individual must do from their heart. They were baptized in Rom. 6:1-4, and they did so from their heart, “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart…” (Rom. 6:17-18). Right from the “heart”, you obeyed, you were baptized into Christ. What joy it is to see someone baptized into Christ and have their sins washed away! Why delay? “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins,” (Acts 22:16). Or you can go on living in your sins, trying to hide them from others, from God, and even from yourself. But there is a better way, the way of the Lord. Dan Peters